

Assemblymember Christine Kehoe

*Brings You News
From Sacramento*



April 16, 2004

Legislative Update

This year's legislative session is in full swing with many of my bills progressing through the legislature. Here's a summary of a few:

AB 782, Privacy Protection - This bill creates essential privacy protections for Californians who are getting divorced or seeking an annulment or legal separation. Currently, whenever a couple goes to court in these cases, their bank accounts, credit card information, lists and locations of assets, and other personal information become public record. Exposing this private financial information opens those couples to identity theft. This bill provides protection against this. AB 782 has passed the Assembly and has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

AB 2208, Insurance Equality Act - This bill, sponsored by Equality California and Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, will prohibit insurance providers from issuing policies or plans – including health, life, auto, renters and homeowners insurance, among others – that discriminate against registered domestic partners. This bill has passed the Assembly Health Committee and has been referred to the Judiciary Committee.

AB 2697, Veterans' Homes – This bill requires that when the state receives federal cost of living increases (COLA) to help off-set the rising cost of providing health services to veterans in our three state veterans homes, the state will not reduce its share of veterans' home funding. Additionally, the bill requires the COLA to supplement existing funds for health care services provided to the homes along with the existing Federal Trust Fund that pays for approximately 20% of the cost incurred by veterans homes. This bill has passed the Assembly Veterans Committee and has been referred to Appropriations Committee.

If you'd like to read the text of any of these bills, go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and search by bill number or author.

Workers' Compensation Reform Passed by Legislature

Both sides of the aisle worked together this morning to pass a comprehensive workers' compensation reform package aimed at protecting workers while reducing costs to California businesses. Combined with last year's effort, we've now completed a top-to-bottom overhaul of California's worker's compensation system.

We're cutting costs, not care for injured workers. These reforms make it easier to see a doctor, get needed care, and get back to work.

We took a significant first step last year - with reforms that are saving \$7 billion every year - and this new round of reforms will save billions more. At the same time, we've taken steps to get injured workers the medical care they need when they need it and speed their return to work.

- For the first time, workers will be entitled to immediate medical care.
- Medical specialists will be available to treat injuries.
- New incentives will be used to help workers get back to work.
- Payments will increase for those for who are most severely disabled.

The legislation is intended to cut billions of dollars out of the \$17.9 billion system for treating workers injured on the job, while striving to ensure injured workers are cared for in a fair and reasonable way.

Higher Education Town Hall Meeting

You are invited to join me at town hall meeting to discuss how to help protect California's investment in higher education. The town hall will be held at UCSD's Institute of Americas on Friday, May 7, at 11 a.m.

Contact me at Assemblymember.Kehoe@assembly.ca.gov for more information on the event.

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Gas Prices Continue to Rise

Once again California motorists are paying exorbitant gasoline prices. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average price of retail regular-grade California gasoline increased 53 cents since the first of the year.

High gasoline prices affect everyone, from families, to small businesses, to our school districts. Every level of our community is burdened by record high prices, and there is no relief in sight.

In response to California's recent price spikes, my Select Committee on Gasoline Competition, Marketing and Pricing is holding hearings to identify the reason for price increases and explore options to reduce prices. As chair, I am asking for a detailed discussion on how the industry is going to handle this crisis.

To read my opinion piece on the subject that was recently published in the *San Diego Union Tribune*, go to <http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040408/news/1z1e8kehoe.html>

Brochures Available

My office provides a variety of free brochures that can give you information on everything from state parks and energy saving tips to how to lobby the State Legislature. I also have copies of the California State Constitution. If you are interested in receiving any of these brochures, please email me at

Assemblymember.Kehoe@assembly.ca.gov.

Brochures available:

- California State Parks in San Diego County
- Golden State ScholarShare program
- Important Information Regarding your Privacy
- California State Map
- Summer Driving Tips
- Bicycle Safety
- Legislative Activity Book for kids
- Senior Resources Guide

Blue Ribbon Fire Commission makes Recommendations

After holding statewide hearings for the past several months, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, on which I serve, has submitted our formal recommendations to Governor Schwarzenegger. The final report was released this week, and is available on-line at www.oes.ca.gov.

The efforts of this commission will result in positive changes in how California deals with fires in the future. I am committed to remaining involved in efforts to improve how California handles fire disasters, and will focus on implementing Commission recommendations. Several of my fire-related bills are currently progressing in the legislature. They are:

AB 224 – Shake Roof Restriction

AB 1510 - Property Tax Relief

AB 1612 – Rapid Disaster Response Act of 2004

AB 2199 – Fire Insurance

If you'd like to read the text of any of these bills, go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and search by bill number or author.

Fire Commission Meeting Photos



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